

## **“Anie Gospell Way”: Religious Diversity in Interregnum Scotland**

R. SCOTT SPURLOCK, M.A., Ph.D.

With the arrival of the English army late in the summer of 1650 a massive influx of alternative religious ideas were introduced into Scotland for the first time, profoundly altering the nation's religious landscape during the Interregnum. Looking back on the closing months of 1650 the Edinburgh diarist John Nicoll commented:

the names of Protestant and Papist wer not now in use, ... in place theairof rais up the name of Covenanteris, Anti-Covenanteris, Croce-Covernanteris, Puritanes, Babarteres, Roun-heidis, Auld-hornes, New-hornes, Croce-Pet[it]ioneris, Brownistes, Separatistes, Malignantis, Sectareis, Royalists, Quakeris, Anabaptistes.<sup>1</sup>

Partly due to the influx of these new ideas, partly as a reaction to the devastating defeat of Scotland's "Covenanted" army at Dunbar, and, more significantly, as a reaction to the factionalism experienced within the Kirk over the previous decade an overt anti-Presbyterian sentiment and scepticism towards the covenants began to appear. As a result, newly introduced alternatives to Presbyterianism did not fall on infertile soil. Division within the Kirk and harsh party persecutions which had seen over 230 ministers deposed in the previous decade created fissures in the Presbyterian disposition of Scotland, like small crevices in a monolithic granite crag, where sectarian seeds found just enough soil to grow. As new religious ideas took root they forced the fractures ever wider, further eroding the uniformity of the Kirk and securing themselves more space to mature. Nicoll commented on January 1,

---

<sup>1</sup> John Nicoll, *A Diary of Public Transactions and Other Occurences, Chiefly in Scotland, 1650-1667*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1836), 38-9.

1651 of growing fears that some ministers of the Kirk were beginning to favour the "Cromwellites".<sup>2</sup> By April, the Kirk generally acknowledged the gravity of the situation in a declaration for nationwide fasting and humiliation by instructing prayer "for those who have fallen into the wayes or errors of the enemy".<sup>3</sup>

Even for those who refrained from becoming full blown "Cromwellites", as Nicoll termed them, disenchantment with what the Kirk's intervention in politics had wrought, were rife. A paper probably produced late in 1650 termed the "Declaration and vindication of the poor opprest Commons of Scotland" singled out the greatest atrocity ever to befall the nation as the oppression of the poor by their own gentry and clergy, labelling them as opportunists and fanatics who had taken the aims of the Covenant to an extreme and carried out "ridiculous" purging of the army before Dunbar. This "Divilish dark plot" represented a betrayal of the kingdom which ultimately led to the "most disgraceful" defeat in the history of Christendom. And despite their gross errors, those responsible for the demise of Scotland persisted "lying in their bastard hatching uncleanness" by continuing to believe they were the only godly party in Scotland. The paper's disgust at the mistreatment of the devout people of Scotland by fellow Scots led the author/s to declare the nation's poor would gladly live peaceably under English rule on two conditions: first, nothing be put upon Scotland that would "molest consciences" or "imply perjury"; and second, no Scots, or at least none of those involved in the government of the Kirk Party, be given positions of trust. These sentiments illustrate the utter despondency engendered by the fruits of Scotland's labours carried out in the name of the covenants. When the paper began its circulation is uncertain, but by January 28, 1652 it had been printed.<sup>4</sup> The sentiments of this paper were not unusual, nor were they the only

---

<sup>2</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Records of the Commissions of the General Assembly*, edd. A.F. Mitchell & James Christie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1892-1909), iii, 343. Hereafter cited as *RCGA*.

<sup>4</sup> Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1853), iii, 387.

dissent expressed towards the Kirk in the wake of Dunbar and Worcester.

At a meeting of Protester held in Edinburgh in early October 1651, the full breadth of the religious milieu taking form in Scotland came into view for the first time.<sup>5</sup> Never had a religious conference in Scotland had such a radically disjointed range of religious perspectives. Numerous sectarian doctrines were put forward including calls to end the national presbytery, support for the lawfulness of lay preaching by any "haiffing the Spirite to preach", opposition to sabbatarianism, and rejection of paedobaptism in favour of believer's baptism.<sup>6</sup> Others brought the covenants into question in varying degrees.<sup>7</sup> John Livingston, minister of Ancrum, declared from the pulpit of St. Giles' that covenants are not equal to Scripture and Scotland "too much" idolised them. Alexander Jaffray, former provost of Aberdeen, supported by John Menzies, professor of divinity at Marischal College and minister of Greyfriars' (Aberdeen), went a step further by submitting a paper which questioned whether the covenants were even legal.<sup>8</sup>

Although few of the arguments brought forward in the assembly have been preserved for posterity, entries in Jaffray's diary provide a good account of what he argued. For Jaffray, "the dreadful appearance of God against us at Dunbar", after so many public appeals to Him, represented not a judgement against the propriety of Scotland's adherence to the covenants (as many of his contemporaries argued), but rather a judgement against the covenants themselves.<sup>9</sup> He argues Scotland had fallen in love with Presbyterianism as "the only way of

---

<sup>5</sup> A list of some of the ministers and ruling elders present is given in *Mercurius Politicus*, 6 Oct., 1651, 1134 [E643:16].

<sup>6</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 61-2, 63.

<sup>7</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 63.

<sup>8</sup> *Mercurius Politicus*, 7 Oct., 1651, 1138. Provost in 1636, '38, '41, '49, and '51 (W. Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen*, 2 vols. (London, 1818), ii, 232).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Jaffray, *Diary of Alexander Jaffray*, ed. John Barclay, 3rd edn. (Aberdeen, 1856), 62.

Jesus Christ". Consequently the maintenance and expansion of the Presbytery had been the primary interest of the covenants.<sup>10</sup> And so, Scotland's great guilt laid in pridefully attempting to impose their chosen form of church government upon others and holding it up as the sole form of Christian church government. "Without doing Presbyterians any wrong," he states, "it is not the only way of Christ, as they would have it, and as in the Covenant all sworn to it. [The Presbytery] is in my apprehension ... but a human invention, composed with much prudence and policy of man's wit, fitted for those times, when it had its rise in Geneva, from that precious and worthy man, Calvin".<sup>11</sup>

Jaffray's paper caused a great stir in the Protester meeting and prompted a private conference with John Carstairs, Samuel Rutherford, Patrick Livingstone and James Guthrie, the leading figures of the Protester party. They spent all morning of 9 October debating in Wariston's chamber, but neither side conceded any ground.<sup>12</sup> Although they waited for nearly a year, a group consisting of Jaffray, Menzies,<sup>13</sup> John Row (minister of Aberdeen's third charge and instructor of Hebrew at Marischal College),<sup>14</sup> William Muir (an elder in the Kirk, professor of mathematics and principal of Marischal College)<sup>15</sup> and the layman Andrew Birnie (regent in Marischal College)<sup>16</sup> eventually separated from the Kirk in October 1652 to form an Independent gathered congregation in Aberdeen. But we will return to them later.

---

<sup>10</sup> Jaffray, *Diary*, 61.

<sup>11</sup> Jaffray, *Diary*, 62-3.

<sup>12</sup> Jaffray, *Diary*, 60.

<sup>13</sup> *Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae Aberdonensis: Selections from the Records of the Marischal College and University, 1593-1860*, ed. P.J. Anderson (Aberdeen, 1898), 34-5, 51, 211.

<sup>14</sup> John Lamont, *The Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton, 1649-1671*, ed. G.R. Kinloch (Edinburgh, 1830), 47.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, *Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae Aberdonensis*, 28, 53.

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, *Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae Aberdonensis*, 36.

### Scottish Sectarians

Disputes over the Kirk and the covenants did not reach their apex in the October Protester meeting. Jaffray's submission initiated a series of papers handed in to various meetings across the country. The first was a “twelve-headed” paper given to the Protester meeting at Edinburgh in mid-November challenging 1. Scotland's adherence to both the covenants and 2. to the monarchy; 3. the coercion of ignorant people to adhere to the covenants; 4. the passionate and bitter invectives against the Godly in England; 5. malignancy – that is support for the secular concerns, usually the monarchy, over right religion; 6. pollution of the Kirk's ordinances by inclusion of the “vilest” men; 7. the idolising of men; 8. refusing the treaty offered by the English; 9. promotion of the Presbytery as the “vtermost attainable perfectione of reformation”; 10. “the smothering of light and withdrawing from duties; 11. the neglect and oppression of Scotland's poor; and finally 12. attempting to carry on the Reformation with scandalous and unsuitable people in places of trust. Little is recorded of the response the paper elicited from fellow Scots, but approving English journals referred to it as “By ane Godly Scott” or “by a godly brother”.<sup>17</sup>

A further paper was submitted to a meeting in late December entitled “Overtures to the Right Honorable Commonwealth of England”.<sup>18</sup> Although again written by Scots, this paper was addressed not to the Kirk, but to the English authorities, prompting the Protesters to label the authors “malignants”, corrupted by sectarian principles.<sup>19</sup> Accusations of malignancy, however, were utterly unfounded. Instead, the authors of these overtures represented converts to the English concepts of religious freedom and toleration, and thus increasingly

<sup>17</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 67; *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. A. Peterkin (Edinburgh, 1838), 645-6; Sir James Balfour, *The Historical Works of James Balfour*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1824), iv, 330-3.

<sup>18</sup> W.I. Hoy, “Entry of Sects into Scotland: A Preliminary Study”, *Reformation and Revolution*, ed. D. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1967), 182n.

<sup>19</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 63; W. Row, *The Life of Mr Robert Blair*, ed. T. McCrie (Edinburgh, 1848), 289.



sceptical of the covenants and Presbyterianism. Or perhaps it might be more correct to say: due to an increasing scepticism towards the covenants and Presbyterianism these "Scottish Sectarians", as they were referred to with increasing regularity, embraced English notions of religious freedom and toleration. Unfortunately, the only known copy of the overtures is now lost, but before the document disappeared W.I. Hoy preserved the essence of the overtures:

that only the "certain" Godly in Scotland<sup>20</sup> are to be entrusted with power although the uncertain are to be considered as brethren; that malignants and noblemen are to be cast out of power and the former brought to trial, and also have their land sequestered; that minor posts not be used as merchandise but given to the English or faithful Scots; that Scots law be replaced by English law; that actions against the present government be punished; that liberty of conscience be granted in religion; blasphemies and heresies be curbed; the mouths of ministers be stopped who preach seditious doctrine; gathered churches conform to the primitive apostolic pattern; and that the Power of the Presbytery be abolished that "the name of a national church may perish under heaven in Brittain".<sup>21</sup>

On January 2, a third paper appeared in broadsheet form entitled *To the Very Honorable the Representative of the Common-Vvealth*.<sup>22</sup> This extremely rare tract is preserved in a sole surviving copy held in the National Library of Scotland and makes four requests.<sup>23</sup> First, that

---

<sup>20</sup> "The 'certain' godly" refers to those bearing outward signs indicative of election.

<sup>21</sup> Hoy, "Entry of Sects", 182n.

<sup>22</sup> Row, *Life of Blair*, 291; Hoy, "Entry of Sects", 183n; *To the Very Honorable the Representative of the Common-Vvealth, the Humble Petition and Remonstrance of Such in Scotland* (Leith, 1652).

<sup>23</sup> Shelfmark: Ry.1.1.73, which has been reproduced on microfilm: MF.SP.141(19).

Scotland and England be made into one equal commonwealth in which citizens of both nations may share the same liberties and privileges; second, that godly governors be chosen who show great integrity, live implicitly by faith and who will not tyrannise over those they are appointed to govern; third, that God’s people be given “all due Christian freedom” to practise their faith without threat of cruelty or coercion, and fourth, those who are selected to rule should be chosen not for their worldly status but for their piety and integrity. The authors’ intentions in making their requests to the English government were, they claimed, to save the godly in Scotland who risked being crushed “by the Ocean-like inundations of Malignant [secular] and Presbyterian Confluences”. Increasingly, under the English regime and with its whole hearted support, those who had become dissatisfied with Kirk and Covenants found a voice. Eventually, the disaffected moved from word to action.

### Separation

Reports of the first significant break from the Kirk came in March 1652, one month after the English regime officially imposed religious toleration in Scotland for anyone worshipping in “a gospel way”. Nicoll states a “malignant and independant party in the North” separated from the Kirk because they found that “bloody” and “barbarous” events always accompanied Scotland’s Presbyterian government.<sup>24</sup> While he includes the entire text of their declaration of separation, Nicoll neglects to include the names of those who signed it or their location, and hence has forced his readers to speculate about its authorship. Although, it has long been assumed this declaration refers to Jaffray’s Aberdeen Independents, who have been the sole gathering to receive any substantial attention, this assumption is incorrect. The clue to answering something about who these separatists were lies in the Presbytery book of Strathbogie.

In June 1652 William Gordon of Dumbennan, a school teacher, stood before the Presbytery of Strathbogie under threat of censure for

---

<sup>24</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 91; Hoy, “Entry of Sects”, 185.

“false, lying, scandalous reproaches against the Kirk of Scotland”.<sup>25</sup> Rather than succumbing to threats of an ecclesiastical reprimand, Gordon responded by submitting a declaration of separation to the Presbytery that matches Nicoll’s almost *verbatim*. The similarity between the declarations is so close it suggests they come from a common source. That is to say Gordon either had direct contact with the authors of the first declaration or shared contact with the same source.

Whatever the precise circumstances, here is a case of separation in north-eastern Scotland completely outside the Presbytery of Aberdeen and separate from the famous Aberdeen Independents who separated five months later. Evidence for other separations in the north-east around this time also exist. Andrew Ballenden, at the prompting of English soldiers, entered the vacant parish charge of Drumoak. There he worked “upon the independent and congregaionall course” for several months before appearing before the Presbytery of Aberdeen to recant in October.<sup>26</sup> Drumoak may have been one of the “severall Kirks about Aberdeen” who had reportedly fallen off and deserted the Presbytery according to the London based news journal *Mercurius Politicus* in March 1652.<sup>27</sup>

Aberdeenshire and the north-east were not the sole bastions of success for the message of separation enthusiastically advocated by English soldiers, chaplains and tracts of propaganda. Nicoll reported in May 1652, without any geographical specification, that laymen took upon themselves the role of the ministry without a “lauchfull calling” and preached, performed weddings and baptisms, and publicly debated their new doctrines. Alexander Cornwell, minister of Muiravonside near Linlithgow, was excommunicated in 1652 for privately performing marriages, some of which were reportedly polygamous, and for

---

<sup>25</sup> *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie, 1631-1654*, ed. J. Stuart (Aberdeen, 1843), 222.

<sup>26</sup> Stuart, *Strathbogie*, 222-3.

<sup>27</sup> *Mercurius Politicus*, (March 25-April 1, 1652), 1493 [E658:13].



baptising “old people”.<sup>28</sup> In Edinburgh, the Scotsman Colonel William Lockhart of Lee, who later served the Commonwealth as a judge and subsequently as a diplomat to France after marrying Cromwell’s niece, opened his home on May 29, 1652 for the meeting of a gathered congregation.<sup>29</sup> Robert Baillie reported in a letter dated July 8 that a group separated from the Kirk in Fenwick despite tearful sermons against schism preached by the parish minister William Guthrie.<sup>30</sup> Evidence of a more general support for “sectarian” or Independent religion within the burgh of Glasgow is evidenced in reports that following a great fire in the city on 15 June 1652, ministers throughout the municipality preached it to have been God’s judgement “for compliance with the sectaries”.<sup>31</sup> Most famously the General Assembly of 1652 censured Thomas Charteris, minister of Stenhouse, for refusing to baptise infants.<sup>32</sup> These events, along with others doubtlessly lost forever, led English journals to report in November 1652 great numbers of Scots were coming out of the divided Kirk into “the Congregational way” and prompted the minister of Kilwinning, James Fergusson, to preach several sermons against toleration, error, separation and Independency.<sup>33</sup>

The momentum of Independency carried into 1653 when a “Congregational” church gathered in the vicinity of Kirkintilloch and

---

<sup>28</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 94; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H. Scott. 8 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915-1950), i, 222.

<sup>29</sup> Archibald Johnston, *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Waristoun*, ed. D.H. Flemming (Edinburgh, 1919), ii, 169. Hereafter cited as Waristoun, *Diary*.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ed. D. Laing, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1841-2), iii, 193, hereafter cited as Baillie, *L & J*; G. Donaldson, “The Emergence of Schism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland”, *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh, 1985), 204-19; 217.

<sup>31</sup> *Mercurius Politicus*, (24 June–1 July, 1652), 1703 [E669:3]; Whitelocke, *Memorials*, iii, 433.

<sup>32</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 94; Row, *Life of Blair*, 297; *RCGA*, ii, 530.

<sup>33</sup> *Perfect Passages* (5-12 Nov., 1652), 571. [E799:33]; *A Perfect Diurnal* (8-15 Nov., 1652), 2290 [E799:35]; James Fergusson, *A Brief Refutation of the Errors of Toleration, Erastianism, Independency and Separation* (Edinburgh, 1692).

Lenzie, with the Englishman John Beverley settled into the charge at the calling of twenty-seven people. This action forced the Presbyterian minister to preach "in the fields, or in a barme" without a stipend.<sup>34</sup> In August 1654 Wariston relayed a report from James Guthrie indicating a congregation of Scots and English soldiers met together in Stirling.<sup>35</sup> That same year, two English Independents, John Collins and John Stalham, were sent to minister in Scotland.<sup>36</sup> Stalham served in Edinburgh for a year before returning to England probably sometime after March 1655.<sup>37</sup> John Collins, educated at Harvard,<sup>38</sup> remained in Scotland until 1659, being called to a new Independent church in Leith in 1658, which although Congregational, rejected paedobaptism.<sup>39</sup> Yet careful reading of the slim surviving sources indicate Stalham, Collins and Beverley were not the first English ministers to serve as ministers to civilian congregations rather than as chaplains to the army.

---

<sup>34</sup> Some records report a church in Lenzie while others mention Kirkinilloch. They are only a mile apart so it seems likely that they are the same congregation. *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, ed. C.H. Firth (Edinburgh, 1895), 265 (henceforward cited as *S & C*); *Mercurius Politicus*, (17-24 Nov.), 2875; Baillie, *L & J*, iii, 202, 217, 244; James Maidment, ed., "Diurnal of Occurrences in Scotland". *The Spottiswoode Miscellany* (Edinburgh, 1845), 75-208, 140; K.D. Holfelder, "Factionalism in the Kirk during the Cromwellian Invasion and Occupation of Scotland, 1650 to 1660: the Protester-Resolutioner Controversy" (Ph.D. Thesis. University of Edinburgh, 1998), 182.

<sup>35</sup> Wariston, *Diary*, ii, 314.

<sup>36</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series 1651-1660*, ed. M.A.E. Green, 13 vols. (London, 1877-86), 1654:195, 450. (Henceforward cited as *CSPD*.)

<sup>37</sup> He was certainly back in Essex by 1657 when he wrote *The Reviler rebuked* (London, 1657) against Richard Farnsworth's "attempted answer" *Vindication of the Scriptures against the Scottish Contradictors*. This work by Farnsworth was written in response to Stalham's anti-Quaker tract written in Edinburgh in 1655: John Stalham, *Contradictions of the Quakers* (Edinburgh, 1655).

<sup>38</sup> W.L. Sachse, "The Migration of New Englanders to England", *American Historical Review*, 53 (1948), 267.

<sup>39</sup> The congregation was not a baptist congregation. *A Collection of State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. T. Birch, 7 vols. (London, 1742), vii, 527.

In July 1652 three English Independents were sent to Scotland in response to a request from the Commissioners of Scotland for some ministers to be placed in English garrisons and other convenient places.<sup>40</sup> Besides the two ministers sent as chaplains (James Brown and Thomas Twisse)<sup>41</sup> Samuel Mather, Thomas Brag and Sidrach Simpson were given £500 to travel to Scotland.<sup>42</sup> Whether Simpson travelled or not is uncertain; if he did, as Francis Bremner has accepted, his stay in Scotland was very short.<sup>43</sup> Mather and Brag definitely did make the journey. Brag stayed in Scotland until September 1653, being latterly at Stirling where he was described as serving as a "minister" rather than a chaplain. Perhaps he ministered to the congregation of English soldiers and Scottish civilians mentioned by Guthrie. When Brag left Scotland another Englishman, Samuel Bryen, replaced him as "minister at Stirling".<sup>44</sup> Samuel Mather, eldest son of Richard Mather and graduate of Harvard (M.A., 1643), resided in Leith where he reputedly ministered to a church until November 1654 when he was called to Ireland.<sup>45</sup> Robert Dalliel, sometimes minister of Swanton Morley, Norfolk, also received £200 pounds to relocate and serve as a minister of the gospel in Scotland in March 1655.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *The Cromwellian Union*, ed. C.S. Terry (Edinburgh, 1902), 99; Anne Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains, 1642-51* (London, 1990), 72; *The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, ed. C. Innes and T. Thomson, 11 vols. (Edinburgh, 1814-44), vi, ii, 747, hereafter cited as *APS*; *CSPD*, 1651-2:191; Nicoll, *Diary*, 91.

<sup>41</sup> Laurence, *Army Chaplains*, 72, 103, 191.

<sup>42</sup> *CSPD*, 1651-2: 610.

<sup>43</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Mather, Samuel"; Tai Liu makes no mention of traveling to Scotland in his entry on Simpson.

<sup>44</sup> *APS*, vi, 750-1. Samuel Bruen is likely the Samuel Bryan whom James Guthrie asked to be a referee in he were to take part in another dispute with James Brown (NLS, Wod.Qu.XVII, fo. 215-18).

<sup>45</sup> Laurence, *Army Chaplains*, 152; *ODNB*, "Mather, Samuel"; Sachse, "The Migration of New Englanders to England", 267.

<sup>46</sup> *APS*, vi, 897. Collins also received £200 pounds in 1655, while Beverley only received £80, probably because he received an additional stipend from the gathered congregation.

By far the most famous Independent gathering formed in Aberdeen under the direction of Alexander Jaffray, John Menzies and John Row. After “eight or nine” weeks of conferences with the “most learned ministers in Aberdeen” the group composed a famous letter voicing support for the “Congregational way” on May 24, 1652 and sent it to the Protesters in Edinburgh. In his journal Jaffray asserted the purity of their intention when he wrote:

some Christians in Aberdeen, men and women, having for a long time been convinced of these things, (long before ever a thought of them was with me,) found themselves obliged to endeavour to have the ordinances administered in a more pure way than there was any hope ever to attain to have them in the national way. But before we would conclude to do any thing of this, it was thought necessary, first to impart our purpose to some Christian friends, and to be willing to hear what they could object against our resolution.<sup>47</sup>

Although they sent their letter to Edinburgh in May, the group did not actually separate until October. In the intervening time they received letters from colleagues across the country including Wariston, David Dickson and Samuel Rutherford; and entertained a visiting delegation of leading Protestors who attempted to dissuade them in August. In November 1652 the Aberdeen Independents gathered in Greyfriars’ Kirk (the chapel of Marischal College and the church under Menzies’ charge) for their first “public” partaking of the “ordinance of the Lords Supper”.<sup>48</sup> Robert Pittilloch, a Scots lawyer and their contemporary, probably referred to this event when he wrote: “a very considerable number of Ministers, Magistrates, and the vulgar sort of people, separated from the promiscuous constitution of a National Church, associated themselves together, and in the presence of the mixt

---

<sup>47</sup> Jaffray, *Diary*, 65.

<sup>48</sup> Jaffray, *Diary*, 66.



multitude did break bread together, as a seal of their resolution never to return to the errour of the multitude any more".<sup>49</sup>

The few histories which mention this early Independency in Scotland tend to mark the high point as the gathered communion in Aberdeen in November 1652, or the months that immediately followed, yet the movement carried on. If anything the Independency movement swelled, particularly in Aberdeen's universities where Baillie claimed in 1654 that "almost all in both colledges, from Remonstrators, had avowedlie gone over to Independencie and Separation".<sup>50</sup> Two years later Baillie continued to lament "our northern separatists ... with whom we must joyne in silence" fearing vacant charges might be filled with "professed Independents" from Aberdeen's nest.<sup>51</sup> But the question must be asked, what became of these gatherings? While the existence of Independently gathered congregations can be confirmed in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Kirkintilloch/Lenzie, Fenwick, Stonehouse, East Kilbride, Perth, Linlithgow, Leith, Stirling and possibly Strathbogie, as well as Birse, Durris and Kinkellar where later reports claim the ministers separated, few details of these groups other than their presence can be scraped together. For this reason, it is necessary to piece together the plight of the Aberdeen gathering as a model suggestive of what became of the others.

Generally it appears that the vast majority of Scots who had stepped out of the Kirk to embrace Independency ended up following one of two paths by 1658. Many of the Aberdeen Independents who, like John Menzies and John Row, maintained orthodox Reformed theology throughout, found themselves gradually drifting back into the

---

<sup>49</sup> R. Pittiloh, *The Hammer of Persecution* (London, 1659), 10. Pittiloch's name is spelled variously in his different publications. For the purpose of this work the spelling given by General Monck on a certificate granted to Pittiloch will be used. (*The Clarke Papers*, ed. C.H. Firth, 4 vols. (London, 1891-1901), iv, 271). F.J. Grant adopted the same spelling in *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532-1943* (Edinburgh, 1944).

<sup>50</sup> Baillie, *L & J*, iii, 242.

<sup>51</sup> Baillie, *L & J*, iii, 308.



Presbyterian Kirk since they only differed on principles of ecclesiology.<sup>52</sup> They eventually came to view their position on ecclesiastical government as differing from the Kirk's more in degree than in kind.<sup>53</sup> For this reason, it is likely many of the Aberdeen Independents swallowed their pride and returned to the Kirk, a process which may have been hastened by the re-eruption of the Protester-Resolutioner debate following the death of Cromwell.

For others the introduction of Independency into Scotland set them onto a new trajectory of sometimes rapid religious progression. Jaffray, although not until after the Restoration, joined with the Quakers. He spent the latter portion of the Interregnum living at a distance from his brethren in Aberdeen while serving the Protectoral government in Edinburgh. According to Baillie, several members of Thomas Charteris' Independent congregation in East Kilbride "turned quakers" before the minister's unfortunate demise in 1656.<sup>54</sup> Some other members of Charteris' congregation reportedly became Baptists.<sup>55</sup> In less than four years a number of Scots became convinced of Independency, joined Charteris' congregation and then subsequently turned Quaker or Baptist. For these individuals, their progression might best be interpreted in light of Jonathon Scott's suggestion that sectarianism within the England of the 1650s represented not "a series of *movements* but ... a succession of *moments*".<sup>56</sup> Hence, for some Scots

---

<sup>52</sup> Menzies later conformed to Episcopacy at the Restoration.

<sup>53</sup> D.F. Chatfield's thesis suggests the differences between New England Congregationalism and the Presbyterian Kirk of the early 1640s were more of degree than of kind: Chatfield, "The Congregationalists of New England and its Repercussions on England and Scotland, 1641-2", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1964), 172ff.

<sup>54</sup> Baillie, *L & J*, iii, 323; Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*, 2 vols. (London, 1753), ii, 494-5; Henderson, "Early", 105. Wariston puts the number at eleven (Wariston, *Diary*, iii, 35).

<sup>55</sup> Pittiloh, *Hammer*, 10-13.

<sup>56</sup> *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* ed. J. Morrill (London, 1992), 10.

Independency served as an initial starting point in a progression towards other more radical positions. Margaret Anderson represents an example of this progression in Aberdeen. The wife of an Aberdeen bailie, Anderson was a member of the Aberdeen Independents before being baptised by a Baptist soldier before the end of the Interregnum. By the time of her death in 1663 Anderson had joined the Quakers.<sup>57</sup>

Thus it would seem that the disappearance of Scottish Independent congregations by the end of the Interregnum owed much to renewed pressure to rejoin the Kirk and a trajectory towards more radical positions. Just as Baillie, Rutherford and the English Presbyterian Thomas Edwards had warned in the previous decade, Independency proved to be a springboard into other “errors” rather than a static ending point for those questioning the Presbyterian Kirk. Those who went beyond Independency generally found themselves in one of two groups, the Baptists or the Quakers.

### Baptists

By 1652 Baptist gatherings were forming across Scotland. The most famous of these met alternately in Edinburgh and Leith before permanently settling in the port town. Other gatherings met in Perth (St Johnston), Cupar and possibly at or near Dundee, and probably in Ayr, Aberdeen and Inverness, locations that definitely had Baptist churches later in the decade.<sup>58</sup> If no Baptist congregation existed in Stirling in 1652, there certainly was in 1653 when the aggressive and

---

<sup>57</sup> John Row, “Diary”, *Scottish Notes and Queries* (Aberdeen), 7 (1894), 70.

<sup>58</sup> *Records of the Churches of Christ Gathered in Fenstanton, Warboys and Hexham, 1644-1720*, ed. E.B. Underhill (London, 1854), 165n, 333; R.B. Hannen, “Cupar, Fife, 1652-1659”, *Baptist Quarterly*, 10 (1940-1), 45-9; J. Scott, “Baptists in Scotland During the Commonwealth”, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 3 (1929), 174-85, 178; D. Douglas, *History of the Baptist Churches in the North of England from 1648 to 1845* (London, 1846), 37-8; James Fraser, *Chronicles of the Frasers*, ed., W. MacKay (Edinburgh, 1905), 415; *Clarke Papers*, iv, 160-1, 258; G.B. Burnet, *The Story of Quakerism in Scotland 1650-1850* (London, 1952), 27.

confrontational Baptist chaplain of Col. Fairfax's regiment, James Brown, arrived. In fact, it has been argued by Baptist historians David Douglas and James Scott that the sect was so prevalent in the army and so widely dispersed throughout the forces that Baptist groups gathered and met in most of the garrisons and citadels throughout the country<sup>59</sup> – an ambitious claim considering upwards of sixty garrisons existed across Scotland at anyone time. Yet some credence to their claims may be given by a contemporaneous history written by James Heath (1629-1664) which described the army that invaded and occupied Scotland to have “swarmed” with Baptists.<sup>60</sup> Certainly there were Baptists in remote places. Evidence indicates Baptists groups were spread from the Borders to Helmsdale, and possibly beyond.<sup>61</sup>

Scots began to take serious notice of the Baptist presence among them as early as the Edinburgh Protester meeting in October 1651 when members famously advocated Believers Baptism and the removal of the state church.<sup>62</sup> In October the following year reports came from Cupar

---

<sup>59</sup> Douglas, *History of the Baptist*, 37; J. Scott, “Baptist Witness During the Commonwealth”, *History of the Baptists in Scotland*, ed. G. Yullie (Glasgow, 1926), 24-35, 26; Scott, “Baptists in Scotland” (1929), 175.

<sup>60</sup> James Heath, *A Brief Chronicle of the Late Intestine War in the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1676), 273.

<sup>61</sup> Throughout the decade the garrisons on Mull, Lewis, Orkney and Shetland were occupied by rotating regiments. The garrison in Orkney may have been at certain times particularly radical as it opposed Monck in 1659 while under the command of Capt. Henry Watson (C.H. Firth and G. Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1940), 516), henceforward cited as *RHCA*). Major Edward Lunne who commanded a company occupying Scalloway Castle in Shetland in 1653 was also discharged from the army in 1659 when Monck cleared out all disaffected troops (*RHCA*, 478, 480). Major Peter Crisp commanded the garrison near Stornaway in 1652 but was removed from his commission in 1659. Both Lunne and Crisp were described as being “of that church” referring to the Baptists (*S & C*, 221; *Clarke Papers*, iv, 160-1, 258; *RHCA*, 480).

<sup>62</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 62; Douglas, *History of the Baptist*, 37; Scott, “Baptists” (1929), 177.

of a Baptist chaplain dipping “over heads and ears” in the River Eden.<sup>63</sup> Despite the relatively few recorded accounts of baptisms, these were not isolated events. According to the Fife chronicler John Lamont throughout March 1653 a significant number of people were re-baptised in the Water of Leith.<sup>64</sup> From April 1653 public baptisms by immersion took place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Bonnington Mill, with as many as fifteen people receiving the ordinance at a time, sometimes with several hundred onlookers. Those being baptised represented diverse social ranks and included Scots of both sexes, although the only individual known by name is Lady Craigie-Wallace, probably from the vicinity of Ayr.<sup>65</sup> Although reports of baptisms from other parts of the country are lacking it is not improbable that similar incidents took place around the many garrisons, especially around the large citadels of Perth, Ayr and Inverness. At least one baptism occurred in Aberdeen, where a significant Baptist presence was firmly rooted.<sup>66</sup> Four Scotswomen are also known to have been baptized in Fife. Other baptisms may have occurred in Dundee where rumours that the Aberdeen minister John Row’s wife received baptism “above Dundie” might suggest baptisms in Dighty Water. In the case of Ayr, supplemental evidence in the Kirk Session records suggest Baptist activity in the area during 1653, possibly centred on Lady Craigie’s well.<sup>67</sup> Certainly by 1653 the growth of the Baptists in Scotland was a source of concern for the Presbyterian authorities. Rumours and

---

<sup>63</sup> Lamont, *Diary*, 49.

<sup>64</sup> Lamont, *Diary*, 54.

<sup>65</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 106; Joan Blaeu, *Atlas novus* (Amsterdam, 1654), v, 54. It is not the present Craigie House as this was built in the eighteenth-century, but the estate is on the correct side of the river.

<sup>66</sup> John Row, “Diary”, 70. For evidence of the Baptist presence in Aberdeen, see: Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (London, 1875), 38; *RHCA*, 309-10. According to Robert Pitilloch the Kirk minister at Durris, William Youngstone, became a Baptist and was replaced by a new minister of the local laird’s choosing (R. Pitilloch, *Hammer*, 10).

<sup>67</sup> Ayrshire Archives, CH2/751/3/2, fo. 290.



accusations ran rife. Bulstrode Whitelocke states the Protestors became so fearful of Baptist progress in that year they produced a tract denouncing the “new Scots Dippers”, although no such paper has survived.<sup>68</sup> Reflecting upon 1653 Nicoll declared: “this yeir Anabaptistes daylie increst in this natioun, quhair nevir nane wes befoir, at leist durst not avow themescelffis: bot now many maid oppin professioun thair of, and avowit the same”.<sup>69</sup>

Although Baptists found early success, two factors jeopardized their continued existence in Scotland. First, their infrastructure rested completely on the English army. Scots were never more than peripheral members. Second, when Baptists lost credibility with the Protectoral regime the Baptist infrastructure fell like a house of cards. The beginning of their end in Scotland came in late 1654 with the discovery of Overton’s plot, in which several Baptist officers and soldiers in Scotland, including Major-General Robert Overton and the Baptist chaplain Samuel Oates, were implicated in a scheme hatched in Aberdeen to overthrow the Protector. Their implication proved hugely detrimental to the Baptists’ relations with the Scots. Presbyterian opponents took full advantage of the apparently sinister intentions, spinning out their own versions of what had transpired. One report alleged a band of armed “anabaptists” planned to rendezvous at Newhaven and then enter Edinburgh on horseback over the frozen Nor Loch. Once inside the city the miscreants intended, in the manner of the Anabaptists at Munster over a century earlier, to massacre all the inhabitants before burning Edinburgh to the ground.<sup>70</sup> Despite there being no truth in these rumours, they did little to settle the nerves of the Scottish populace. Rumours of the “bloody” nature of the plot even circulated among English soldiers.<sup>71</sup> As a result of the Baptists’ inability

---

<sup>68</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, iii, 481.

<sup>69</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 106.

<sup>70</sup> “Collections by a private hand being kingly of matters from 1650-1662”. NLS. Wod.Qu.XXXVII, fos. 21-39, fo. 37.

<sup>71</sup> *Letters from Roundhead officers written from Scotland and chiefly addressed to Captain Adam Baynes*, ed. J.Y. Akerman (Edinburgh, 1856), 114.



to distance themselves from the Munsterite stereotypes, the involvement of Scots civilians dwindled. A letter sent to Baptist brethren back in England in November 1655 noted the decline of civilian membership and relayed that the congregation in Leith comprised mostly soldiers.<sup>72</sup> By 1657 Robert Blair could claim that Baptist were more feared in Scotland than Cromwell.<sup>73</sup> Their association with conspiracy, intrigue and the atrocities of Anabaptists long past set them on a downward trajectory in Scotland.

### Quakers

The Quakers had a very different experience and represent the sole lasting vestige of Interregnum religious diversity. Consensus among historians has been that the first Scottish Quaker meetings formed in the west of Lanarkshire, near Glassford, in 1653 when John Hart of Glassford and Alexander Hamilton of Drumbowy, along with Hamilton's wife and sister, began to meet regularly. Soon after additional meetings formed at Garthshore and Bedcow (both very near Kirkintilloch/Lenzie).<sup>74</sup>

Some answers as to how these Scots based meetings of Friends initially formed can be gleaned from closer analysis of the key figures involved in the west of Scotland, who are the best documented. Alexander Hamilton and his family, who established the meeting at Glassford, are known to have been members of the gathered church formed by Charteris at Kilbride. As members of a gathered congregation it is possible the Hamiltons had closer contact with the English soldiers stationed in that part of the country than did their fellow compatriots, since they had already embraced a religion that their Presbyterian neighbours would have deemed "English". Perhaps this is

---

<sup>72</sup> Underhill, *Records*, 164.

<sup>73</sup> Row, *Life of Blair*, 333.

<sup>74</sup> Burnet, *Quakerism*, 14; Besse, *Collection*, ii, 494. W.F. Miller puts the date as late as 1656 (W.F. Miller, "Notes on the Early Records of Friends in the South of Scotland from 1656 to about 1790", *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 1 (1903), 70).

how they met Quaker soldiers and were convinced. As has already been noted, Hamilton and his family certainly were not the only Scots to be drawn into Independency before moving to a more radical position. Whether John Hart, the fellow founding member of the Glassford meeting, was involved with this congregation is uncertain, but Wariston claims a total of eleven members of Charteris' congregations became Quakers before the minister's death in 1656.<sup>75</sup>

Yet, the story of Quaker origins in Scotland may not be so clear cut. Despite the near universally accepted theory that those convinced in 1653 were the first Scottish Quakers, the Scots antiquarian Robert Mylne, almost a contemporary (c.1643-1747), claimed an earlier proselyte. Mylne identified Thomas Wood, whose work *A Dead-Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland* was published posthumously in 1651, to have been, in fact, a Quaker.<sup>76</sup> There is no other evidence either to support or challenge Mylne's claim that Wood, who died in 1651, was a Quaker.<sup>77</sup> Nor is there any evidence of other Quakers in the east of Scotland until two years later. However, the presence of English soldiers in Leith from September 1650 provided ample opportunity for the conviction of local people. Even if Wood, who according to other accounts had a long history of run-ins with the Kirk, had been dead for two months when his tract was published, that would have meant he lived for a full year in the English-occupied town of Leith. The great difficulty is determining the influence of Quakers in the army when it arrived in Scotland in late July 1650. The infamous James Nayler was in Scotland that year, but he was not actually convinced until after his return to England in 1651.

Another important question is how early the word "Quaker" can be used in regards to Scotland. The "Society of Friends" was initiated in

---

<sup>75</sup> Wariston, *Diary*, iii, 35.

<sup>76</sup> NLS, 1.337. See above.

<sup>77</sup> William Dundas makes several references to Quakers that he met in Scotland, as well as biographical information about Wood, but he makes no claim that Wood was a Quaker (William Dundas, *A Few Words of Truth from the Spirit of Truth* (1673)).

1647 with the gathering of Seekers by George Fox in north of England. The name “Quaker” came to be famously and concretely pinned to the Friends in 1650. Moreover, it might be argued that the movement did not really take root as a national movement until Fox established a base at Swarthmore Hall in the latter half of 1652. Yet, for the purpose of this paper the impact of Quakerism in Scotland can be established by the close of 1650, because (as cited in the opening quote of this paper) that is when John Nicoll first took notice of the movement in Edinburgh.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, if Nicoll reports that there were indeed Quakers in Scotland in late 1650, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Wood could indeed have been influenced by Friends within the army and this may have been his motivation for producing *A Dead-Man’s Testament*. A second report, from November 1652, might also suggest another Quaker foothold in Scotland prior to the gatherings in 1653. The English journal *Faithful Scout* stated that some “Shakers” were brought before the authorities because “there actions are such as doth much trouble the godly people, not onely Presbyterians, but such as are for the Congregational way, they do loath and detest such blasphemous and vilde practices”.<sup>79</sup> Nothing could be proven against them in this trial and no other information about their identities is given. Whether these “Shakers” were actually Quakers, since their title may not have yet been known in rural Scotland, is uncertain, but notice of such enthusiastic activity is important.

From 1654 the sect in Scotland experienced a significant boon through a flood of English Quaker missionaries. At least fifty travelled to Scotland between 1654 and 1657, twenty in 1655 alone.<sup>80</sup> These

---

<sup>78</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 39.

<sup>79</sup> *The Faithful Scout* (no. 95, 5-13 Nov. 1652), 746 [E799(34)] and (mo. 96, 12-19 Nov. 1652), 752 [E799(38)].

<sup>80</sup> Burnet, *Quakerism*, 15; W.F. Miller, “Stranger Friends Visiting Seotland, 1650-1797”, *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 12 (1915), 80; Hoy, “Entry of Sects”, 199. J. Torrance puts the number visiting in ‘55 at a minimum of seventeen (J. Torrance, “The Quaker Movement in Seotland”, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 3 (1929), 31-42, 32).

missionaries visited many places in Scotland including Orkney and Shetland. Two Quakers even reached Lochaber in December 1657.<sup>81</sup> They attempted to visit the garrison at Dunstaffnage Castle, but the bitter winter weather prevented it. Instead they stayed in Lochaber (the town now called Fort William) for several days, proclaiming the truth to the residents. The reporter of this visit, Captain Timothy Langley, was unsure if they ever entered the English garrison at Inverlochy, but claims in December 1657 new Quaker missionaries were sent into the region weekly.<sup>82</sup>

While earlier meetings of Friends in the west, as well as in Col. Osborne's Edinburgh home, had met quietly, the new missionaries interrupted services of both the Kirk and the gathered churches. They preached in or outside parish churches, much to the dismay of the ministers, and took advantage of public gatherings such as markets, horse races and even executions as opportunities to spread the truth. There are very few reports of Scottish Quakers instigating public disturbances, especially before 1656. Even Quakers in the English regiments tended to keep quite a low profile until the arrival of these later missionaries. In Inverness for instance, it was not until the arrival of the often-troublesome nineteen year-old John Hall in 1657 that any of the Quakers there ventured to interrupt services in a "steeplehouse", which on this occasion happened to be a Baptist Church.<sup>83</sup> Such disturbances meant many in the English regime found the growth of Quakers as disturbing as the Kirk did.

By 1656 pressure against Quakers increased throughout the British sphere of influence. In that year the regime in Ireland proclaimed the Quakers to be their greatest enemy, while the government of Massachusetts passed a law forbidding them in the colony.<sup>84</sup> Scotland was no exception to this trend. The first cases of Quaker persecution in

---

<sup>81</sup> Burnet, *Quakerism*, 26.

<sup>82</sup> Thurloe, *Collection*, vi, 708.

<sup>83</sup> Burnet, *Quakerism*, 27.

<sup>84</sup> Thurloe, *Collection*, iv, 508; Ebenezer Hazard, *Historical Collections* (Philadelphia, 1792-4), i, 630-2.

Scotland took place in June 1656 when the Scotsman William Stockdale and the Englishman John Bowron were “shamefully” and forcefully driven from the town of Strathaven for proclaiming their message of the truth in the streets.<sup>85</sup> This sort of mob violence is what Quakers referred to as “Club Law”. No clear reason is given for the sudden appearance of violent persecution against a meeting that had been gathering there for three years. The most likely factors to have brought this change were the removal of the garrison from Avondale Castle in the village of Strathaven and the imposition of new legal acts and judicial positions, including act against vagrants and the resurrection of Justices of the Peace originally introduced into Scotland by James VI in 1609.

Unlike Baptist gatherings which had very close ties to the English army, Scottish Quakers formed among locals outwith the vicinity of garrisons, because they were not dependent either upon clergy or on leadership being provided by the English soldiery or government. Whereas Baptists, who required a letter from an adherents’ previous church to assure upright life and doctrine, tended to remain tied to the “missionaries” who brought the sect to Scotland, the Quakers required no prior experience, no ordination and no oversight, making them more mobile and allowing meetings to form anywhere comprised entirely of local members. This freedom from English garrisons, however, made them far more vulnerable to persecution.

In the spring of 1657, sensing threats of excommunication did little to deter Quakers, the Synod of Glasgow made concerted efforts to discourage them by intensifying labours to ostracise them socially. They declared anyone found to be a Quaker would face immediate excommunication. At the end of May seven Friends were excommunicated in the Presbytery of Lanark.<sup>86</sup> In addition the synod declared any member of the local communities trading with,

---

<sup>85</sup> “Some Early Suffering in Scotland”, *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 21 (1924), 68; NAS, CH10/1/66, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *Ecclesiastical Records. Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark, 1623-1709*, ed. J. Robertson (Edinburgh, 1839), 103.



entertaining or lodging any Quaker risked censure as well.<sup>87</sup> Gone were the days when the English army would automatically intervene for those suffering for conscience sake. Subsequent to this order Quakers were stoned or beaten, while those who housed them in Newmilns (Ayrshire), Strathaven, Lesmahagow, Kirkintilloch, East Kilbride and Glassford were arrested under the orders of J.P.s sympathetic to the Presbyterians.<sup>88</sup> Other J.P.s however, used their position of influence to protect Quakers. George Fox reported, also in 1657, that the Governor of Glasgow, Colonel Richard Ashfield, "being a justice of peace" prevented Presbyterian persecution of the Quakers within his jurisdiction.<sup>89</sup> Ashfield's generosity to the Quakers included granting passes for two English Quaker missionaries to travel through Fife and on to Inverness at their leisure, something that greatly displeased the governor of Perth, Colonel Daniels (also a J.P.).<sup>90</sup>

In 1657 heightened fears over the stability of the regime, coupled with increased radical behaviour by Quakers, led Monck to large scale cashiering from the army. This, however, did not have the significantly detrimental impact on the Quakers as it had earlier with the Baptists. The Quakers were fundamentally a civilian movement. In the face of declining numbers within the Army missionary activities led several prominent Scots to be convinced in 1657, among them: Lady Margaret Hamilton (possibly the daughter of the Duke of Hamilton), John

---

<sup>87</sup> George Weare, *The Doctrins & Principles of the Priests of Scotland, Contrary to the Doctrine of Christ and the Apostles Here All May See, the Priests of Scotland, and Their Church, and Their Persecution, Against the Saints, and Lambs, Servants, and Children of God, Which the Lord Moved to go among Them, to Visit the Seed of God, in That Dark Wildernesse Country, Who Has Been as Sheep among Wolves* (London, 1657), 14; Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London, 1985), 49; *To You the Parliament Sitting at Westminster* (London, 1659); Stephen Crisp, *Description of the Church of Scotland* (London, 1660), 14.

<sup>88</sup> Weare, *Doctrins*, 13-4.

<sup>89</sup> George Fox, *The Journal*, ed. Nigel Smith (London, 1998), 246.

<sup>90</sup> *Scotland and the Protectorate*, ed. C.H. Firth (Edinburgh, 1899), 50, 314. Hereafter cited as *S & P*.

Swinton of that ilk, Sir Gideon Scott of Highchester, Walter Scott of Raeburn, Charles Ormiston (brother of Gideon Scott), Anthony Haig of Bemersyde, and his brother William.<sup>91</sup>

### Sectarian Unity in the Closing Years of the Interregnum

Though Quaker growth continued throughout 1657 and Baptists maintained a moderate presence things changed considerably by the middle of the following year. Since the failure of Overton's plot in December 1654 Baptists, along with Quakers, had been implicated in several other failed conspiracies against the Protector or the government throughout the three nations.<sup>92</sup> In the space of five years they had changed from being the bedrock of the army and Commonwealth dream to being perceived as the single greatest threat to its continuance. Moreover a significant change had taken place within the government. More moderate Independents joined Cromwell in the inner circle of the government and the radical ecclesiology and eschatological vision once so integral to the successful formation of a Christian Commonwealth were pushed to the fringe and viewed with distrust.<sup>93</sup>

Feeling increasingly marginalised, particularly in the uncertainty following the death of the Protector in the previous year, some persons "well affected" to the English Commonwealth "in the vicinity of Edinburgh" produced a petition in July 1659 lobbying for the permanent establishment of the religious toleration promised in February 1652 and requesting all previous Scottish legislation opposed to toleration be abolished. C.H. Firth attributed this supplication to the "gathered churches", by which he meant the Independents.<sup>94</sup> Certainly it

<sup>91</sup> George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. Norman Penney, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1911), i, 451 (292.3).

<sup>92</sup> Row, *Life of Blair*, 330, 333; Whitelocke, *Memorials*, iv, 234, 288.

<sup>93</sup> Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660*, *International Archives of the History of Ideas*: 61 (The Hague, 1973), 140-60.

<sup>94</sup> *Clarke Papers*, iv, 51n; *S & C*, xxxix-xli; F.D. Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979, 1999), 242.

expressed desires articulated by the Scottish Sectarians earlier in the decade. However, Scots contemporaries were quick to point out that its subscription included more than just Independents. The truth is the petition served as a rallying point for all the sectarian groups in Scotland and represents the most profound impact of the introduction of Protestant diversity and toleration into Scotland.

Despite Robert Blair's assertion that very "few Scots of any note" signed the petition, the signatures to the petition provide fascinating insight into a shared endeavour by Scots Quakers, Independents and Baptists in a petition to achieve toleration. Among the more than two hundred signatures to the petition were Archibald Weir, James Lindsey and William Dundas of Dundas all of whom were described in *The Hammer of Persecution* as being removed from their posts in 1658 for holding Baptist sympathies, as well as Robert Gordon demoted for Independency.<sup>95</sup> The former Protester Thomas Ireland. Sir James MacDowall of Garthland and "Peter Inglish" (probably the part time propagandist for the English living in Leith, author of *The Survey of Policy* (1653)), also signed. So did William Dundas (brother of the laird of Duddingston), Lieutenant William Govan and Andrew Abernethie, who had been excommunicated for joining with the English in 1650/1. All were known to favour Independency.<sup>96</sup> Other signatories were John Home (servitor to Dundas of that Ilk) accused of joining with the English in 1651 but not excommunicated for it, and Henry Hope, a Scot who served as Treasurer for the High Court of Justice.<sup>97</sup> Patrick Waterstone, an Orcadian minister who officially gathered an Independent church on the island of Stronsay sometime before 1660, also appears as a subscriber.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> NLS, Wod.Fol.XXX. (27), fo. 106; Pittiloh, *Hammer*, 12-3; *S & P*, 389.

<sup>96</sup> Wod.Fol.XXX. (27), fo. 106; Row, *Life of Blair*, 253, 270. Abernethie was appointed a J.P. for "Edinburgh Shire" in 1656 showing that he continued to be in favour with the regime (*S & P*, 312).

<sup>97</sup> Nicoll, *Diary*, 52.

<sup>98</sup> Wod.Fol.XXX. (27), fo. 106.

Among the Quakers who signed the petition were a significant number from meetings in the west of Scotland, such as Robert Tod, Andrew Gray, John Lococke, William Mitchell, John Hart, Andrew Hamilton, Andrew Brown, Thomas Jack, Alexander Hamilton, Gabriel Hood [Hud], John Hutcheson, William Gray<sup>99</sup> and John Mitchell, all of whom are mentioned in the earliest recorded history of Quakers in the west.<sup>100</sup> A further dozen signatories are described in the 1659 London edition of the Quaker work *Doctrines and Principles* as having been excommunicated from the Kirk for being Friends.<sup>101</sup> That these individuals had been excommunicated by ministers of the Kirk suggests they were at one time members of the Church of Scotland, that is to say Scottish. Prominent Quakers from other parts of the country also signed, including William Osborne, originally of Edinburgh and subsequently resident in the vicinity of Lennoxton, Anthony Haig of Bemersyde near Melrose, and Andrew Robison [Robeson]<sup>102</sup> and Richard Rae of Edinburgh.<sup>103</sup> Another Scottish signatory William Welch, the Clerk to the Admiralty, may also have been a Quaker (at least his wife Sarah certainly was).<sup>104</sup>

Though the petition claimed to be from Edinburgh and its immediate vicinity, signatures evidently came from a much wider area, most notably demonstrated by the signature of the Orcadian Patrick Waterstone. The wide dispersal of these signatures, collected in a short period of time, gives an indication of the range of Scots who separated from the national Kirk. Although a contemporary claim that there "had been thousands in Scotland separated from the National Church" is

<sup>99</sup> Co-author of *The Doctrins & Principles of the Priests of Scotland* (1657).

<sup>100</sup> NAS, CH10/1/66, 1-3; CH10/1/65, 2-4; Robertson, *Lanark*, 101-3.

<sup>101</sup> William Stockdale, *The Doctrines and Principles* (London, 1659), 3-6; NLS Wod.Fol.XXX. (27), fo. 106.

<sup>102</sup> In 1662 Robeson was imprisoned in Duns for being a Quaker, during which time he produced a letter to the people of Scotland. In this letter he declares himself to be a Scot, Scotland being the land of his 'nativitie' (NLS, MS. 2201, fo. 99).

<sup>103</sup> Penney, *Fox*, i, 451 (292.3), 452 (296.1).

<sup>104</sup> *S & P*, 390.



probably exaggerated, this supplication exhibits a significant number of Scots continuing to pursue the ideals of toleration.<sup>105</sup> But it must be noted the numbers here only represent the male portion of Scots separated from the Kirk. Lady Gordon is the only female subscriber to the paper. Taking this into account the numbers would swell drastically. Especially as the spymaster Timothy Langley reported in late 1658 that Quakerism in Edinburgh was particularly strong among women and the trend among Baptist adherents appears to indicate a high proportion of female proselytes.<sup>106</sup> Although the petition can in no way provide an accurate estimate of how many people considered themselves members of a sectarian party, it is still of crucial significance, for what it demonstrates about Scots of previously factious inter-relationships yet unwilling to conform to the national Kirk, speaking in a united voice to request "Gospel Priviledges" for all Christians save Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the question may be asked: What impact did the introduction of sectarian religion during the Interregnum have upon Scotland? If any, was it lasting? Although the Quakers were the only religious group introduced during the Interregnum to survive beyond the Restoration period, the relationship between the people of Scotland and alternative forms of Protestantism is a crucially important subject. The religious controversy within Interregnum Scotland between the Kirk and sects, has largely been overshadowed by the subsequent struggle between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism in the following decades. Successive historians of the Kirk have looked back over the seventeenth-century as a time when it was twice victorious over Episcopacy and the doctrines of the Kirk dominated those of the Independents in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. However, in practical terms, the price paid for the advancement of the Presbyterian

---

<sup>105</sup> Pittiloh, *Hammer*, 13.

<sup>106</sup> Thurloe, *Collection*, vi, 709.



cause weighed heavily upon the people of Scotland. It embroiled them in two English Civil Wars and led to England's invasion of Scotland in 1650. The human cost of this religious crusade was enormous. Just in Scotland's defeats at Dunbar (3 September, 1650) and Worcester (3 September, 1651) approximately 20,000 Scotsmen were taken prisoner: many died in captivity or were shipped as indentured servants to the colonies, most never saw Scotland again.<sup>107</sup>

Far from being a decade in which the only questions relating to Presbytery and the covenants were regarding how to best propagate them, Scotland's devotion to the Kirk, covenants and king all came under intense scrutiny during the Interregnum. This intense re-evaluation was exacerbated by the polemic dialogue carried on by the English army and the Kirk before the Battle of Dunbar. When Scotland's army, which boasted so many advantages, was decimated at Dunbar in such an emphatic manner, men like Alexander Jaffray began to ask whether Dunbar should be viewed as a divine judgement against the ideologies to which Scotland had pinned their hopes: Kirk, covenants and Presbytery. They began to entertain the possibility that the way forward might be outside a national Presbyterian Kirk.

While ascertaining a precise number of Scots who accepted sectarian doctrines is not possible, it is wrong to accept James Guthrie's 1659 claim that “scarce” one in a thousand Scots were “infected” as evidence of a minimal impact of sectarian influences without noting his admission “some hundreds” had joined with sects.<sup>108</sup> Guthrie gauged the health of the church by overall national adherence and so the presence of several hundred sectarians “being openly fallen off to

---

<sup>107</sup> J.D. Grainger, *Cromwell Against the Scots: The Last Anglo-Saxon War, 1650-1652* (East Linton, 1997), 42-58; David Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Scotland, 1644-51* (Edinburgh, 1977, 2003), 149, 174; Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 11; Diane Rapaport, “Scottish Slavery in 17th-Century New England”, *History Scotland*, 5.1 (2005), 44-52.

<sup>108</sup> James Guthrie, *Some Considerations Contributing Unto the Discoverie of the Dangers That Threaten Religion and the Work of the Reformation in the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1660), 65, 66; Hoy, “Entry of Sects”, 209.

Independency, some to Anabaptism, some to Quakerism" may have seemed "inconsiderable in comparison to the Body of this Church".<sup>109</sup> For this reason Guthrie could disparage claims of success by opponents of the Kirk as unjustifiable. Yet in making such claims he failed to recognize the ecclesiological perspective of those groups who by self-definition perceived themselves to be a small amount of "wheat" collected out of the "chaff" majority. As a result, measuring success by numerical quotas is unfair in light of their distinctly different ecclesiological definitions. While the national Kirk strove for uniformity and wholesale inclusion of Scotland's populace, these radical groups believed they would always be the righteous minority. Achievement should therefore be measured in terms of an established presence represented by a strong voice advocating their principles. By such standards even Guthrie would have to admit sectarian success by the end of 1659 as they had admittedly "no small footing amongst us" and "strongly" pleaded for continued toleration for all Protestants save Episcopalians.<sup>110</sup> Hence Guthrie argued "sectarians" represented a dangerous leaven which, although proportionately small in comparison to the national church, ought to be feared for their "growth and increase ... in Scotland".<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, the success of the religious revolution in Scotland during these ten years manifested itself in two ways. The first was the survival of the Quakers beyond the Restoration until the present day, which Alan Macinnes calls "the one British religious legacy of the 1650s ... within the indigenous population of Scotland".<sup>112</sup> The second was the petition for "Gospel Priviledges" presented to Parliament in 1659. Putting aside the modern habit of measuring the success of the church by numerical membership, we may be able to appreciate the degree of change experienced by those who in the space of a decade went from supporting violent expansion of a particular ecclesiastical structure to

<sup>109</sup> Guthrie, *Some Considerations*, 65, 85.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 68, 69.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>112</sup> A.I. Macinnes, *The British Revolution, 1629-1660* (London, 2005), 287 n.44.

embracing Cromwell's desire for Christian unity and toleration. So it might be said: in signing a petition requesting gospel privileges for all, Scottish proselytes to “English” religions shone brighter in their principles than the missionaries who had brought the message of toleration and the politicians who had advocated it, for their mutual mistrust is what brought the downfall of the Commonwealth in the months that followed.

*University of Edinburgh*

